



SECTION 4

Recreation and Leisure Services Department Analysis and Recommendations



Recreation and Leisure Services Department Analysis and Recommendations

Current Organization

A review of the current organization structure indicates two basic divisions within the department. The maintenance and recreation divisions operate under the supervision of the Recreation and Leisure Services Director. In departments the size of Columbia County, it is not unusual to see a limited number of divisions in the organization chart. However, specialized skills and effective communication among staff are needed to ensure that the public's desire for program diversity and well maintained facilities are being provided. At the same time it is important to meet the policy and budgetary mandates of the overall county government.

The effectiveness of the current organization structure would be viewed as fair based on the survey responses requesting more diverse programs, more convenient parks and programs, and the desire to see more recreation sports programs rather than sports programs that emphasize winning. At the same time, the trends in recreation departments to increase revenue generation from within the department add to the need for more specialization within the department's organization structure.

There are generally two types of positions: line and staff. Line positions have direct responsibility for achieving the goals of the Department. Staff positions (secretaries, bookkeepers, etc.) provide expertise and technical support for the line positions. The line positions have the most direct contact with citizens when delivering the department's services. They are the director, superintendents, supervisors, crew chiefs, etc. The staff positions of administrative assistant to the director and secretarial or clerk positions should be depicted as such on the organizational chart. The titles used should follow those of other departments of county governments, or those of other recreation and park agencies. The titles recommended for the Columbia County Recreation and Leisure Services Department are comparable to those used by similar agencies in the southeastern United States. Recommended changes are in the text describing the proposed department divisions and positions later in this section.

The current structure is broad in scope and does not allow for specialized divisions and expansion. This has largely been driven by the fact that the current programming is heavily directed toward youth athletics. The department's background and the staff's programming direction have been so concentrated in providing Columbia County with youth athletic programming that other forms of recreation have gone unmet, and diverse recreation facilities have not been provided. At Wildwood, where the Wildwood staff is not trained or versed in resource management or passive and nature-based recreation and programming, opportunities to provide diverse recreation programs are not being realized. The lack of a trained staff at this 975-acre lakeside park has resulted in limited revenue generating operations for the recreation department.

Many members of both recreation and maintenance staff work flexible hours several times throughout the year to compensate for time spent as nighttime ballfield complex liaisons, collecting and distributing team uniforms, and, in the maintenance department's case, special events workers. These practices limit the effectiveness of the staff positions. This especially puts constraints on the programming staff member's time devoted to managing and developing new programming during regular business hours. This limits the time staff is in the office, available to take phone calls from the public, maintenance staff's time in conducting routine maintenance inspections and completing preventive maintenance projects.

All full-time recreation staff members work from Patriots Park's offices. All program registration is held at Patriots Park. This location is centralized within the physical county, but not in relation to the population distribution of the county. In the user survey in Section 3 of this report, many county residents requested alternative locations and methods for program registration. The surveys, as well as the public meetings, revealed that the public felt that the travel distance to Patriots Park was too long.

The remaining portion of this section of the report addresses the organization structure, staffing needs, maintenance and fee policies and revenue generation. Recommendations are made to improve service to the community and improve overall delivery of diverse recreation programs.

Organizational Structure Recommendations

One of the 36 standards of the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) considered fundamental to a quality recreation department is organizational structure. This standard states that:

The Agency shall establish an organizational structure, specifying in detail the interrelationships of the system from the highest authority to all staff positions.

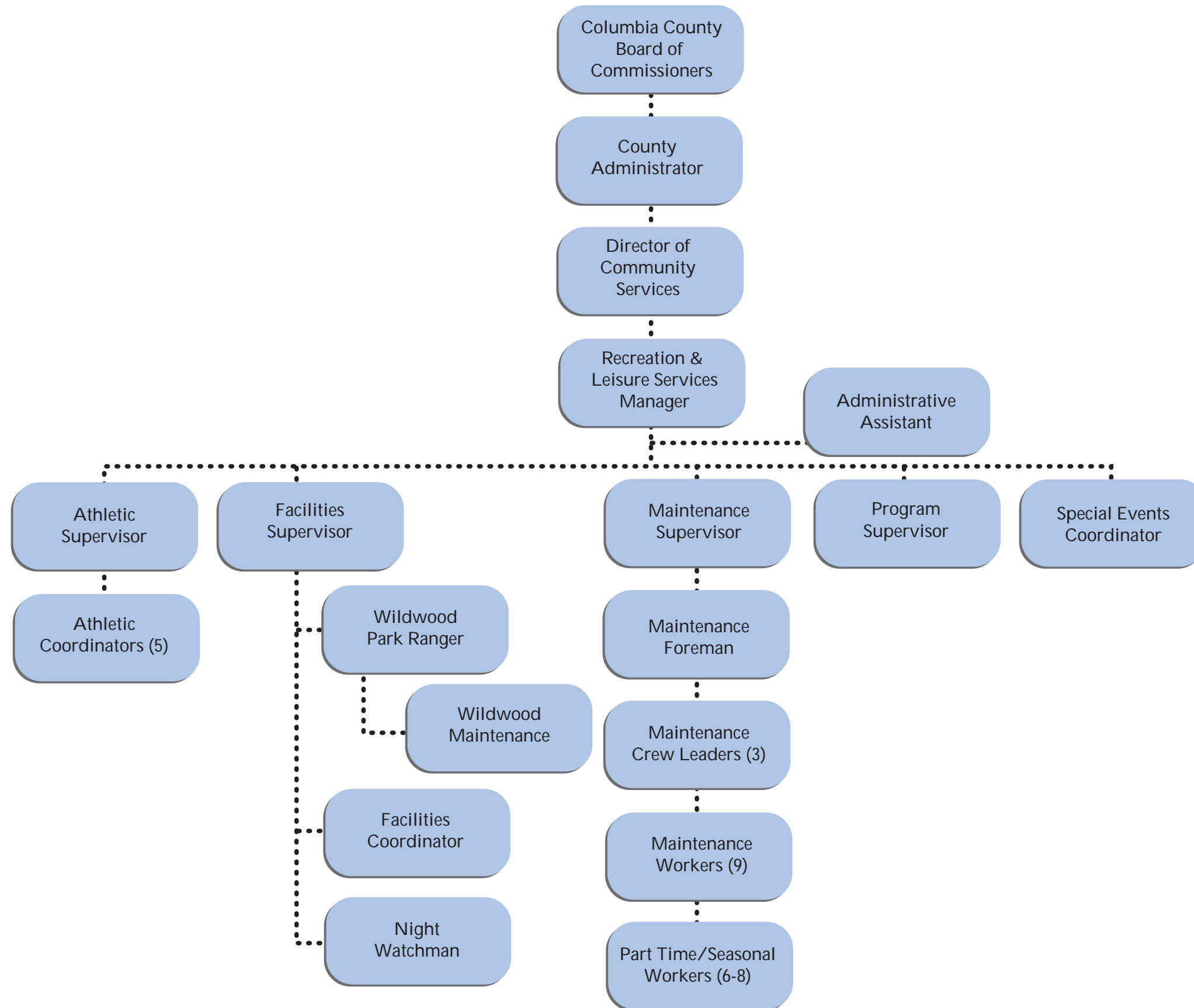
The Commission states, "The Agency's structure should be established so that the alignment of responsibility and delegation of authority is clearly understood to enable the Agency to carry out its goals." This should be depicted in an officially adopted organizational chart that should be updated at least annually and posted permanently in at least one area accessible to all employees.

Figure 4.1 shows the current organization chart for the Columbia County Recreation and Leisure Services Department.

To improve communication with the public and to expand programming, reorganization of the department into a more traditional recreation department "work division" is recommended. The reorganization will include an administrative division headed by the Director of Recreation and Leisure Services, a Recreation Superintendent, a Special Services Superintendent and a Maintenance Superintendent. Administrative staff will provide clerical, accounting, data entry and telephone support services for each division. The individual divisions that make up the overall department are discussed in the following pages.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Recreation & Leisure
Services Department



**Current
Organization
Chart**

Figure 4.1

Administrative Division

Headed by the Director of Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services, this division is responsible for the overall management of the department budget, county policy relating to employment and disciplinary actions, and for establishing and implementing the departmental goals and visions. This division will assist the other divisions in all accounting, financial and purchasing matters and hiring.

Director of Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services

The Director will work with the county's senior staff and the Board of Commissioners and Recreation Advisory Board Members. The primary duties of the Director include:

- Managing the finances of the Department
- Developing the Department's annual budget
- Developing a vision and implementing strategy for the Department's vision
- Communicating the Department's vision to both the boards that direct the Department and to the public
- Serving as a liaison between the staff and the public
- Providing direction to staff on special tasks
- Conducting internal staff meetings to ensure the Department is meeting goals
- Reviewing and establishing fees to be charged by the Department
- Making presentations to the Board of Commissioners, boards and civic organizations
- Determining capital projects and providing oversight in the selection of consultants and contractors

The level of daily participation in these duties varies with each Director's management style and comfort level with support staff. Preparation of the department's annual budget can range from meeting with upper level staff to reviewing all budget requests and working with individual staff members in developing a new program budget. The Director shall delegate and oversee progress and completion of work assigned to staff members. Another important role of the Director is to encourage growth among the staff members by sharing knowledge and experience, creating more expertise throughout the Department.

It is important for the Director to have time to be involved with the County Manager, Director of Community Services and the Board of Commissioners in developing a collective vision for the Department and creating the public support needed to execute the vision. The Director should also take time to share this vision with the county's citizens, civic organizations, and allied providers such as schools. The greater the public awareness of the Department's vision, the more support it will receive both in terms of volunteers and financial support.

The Director of the Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services Department should be a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) with a bachelor's degree in a recreation (or allied recreation) program from an accredited college. The Director should be active in professional organizations such as the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and the state recreation and parks association.

A sound administrative system is crucial to the operation of any recreation department. Also crucial is a professional administrator to head the system. Another of the CAPRA fundamental standards states:

There shall be a professionally-qualified administrator who is responsible to the managing authority for the management, direction, and control of the operations and administration of the agency, and who shall have authority to perform such responsibilities.

The Columbia County Department meets this standard as the Director is a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP).

Administrative Assistant to the Director

The Administrative Assistant to the Director shall report directly to the Director and be given responsibility for the day-to-day accounting and bookkeeping and other records necessary for budgeting. This arrangement is also in accord with two other fundamental CAPRA standards:

The Agency shall have an accounting system, including an independent audit.

The Agency shall have a management information system, including statistical and data summaries of Agency activities, such as daily, monthly, and annual reports.

Senior Administrative Specialist

While individual staff members may be responsible for various reports and inventories, it is important that one member of the administrative team have the authority to ensure that all required documents are properly prepared, turned in, filed and distributed. This person should be the Senior Administrative Assistant to the Director. The Senior Administrative Specialist reports to the Division Director and has a variety of responsibilities including research, analysis, and the supervision of clerical staff. The Senior Administrative Specialist will aid in budget preparation, reports, grant applications and other documents that the director oversees. Other duties include organizing special department functions and reports for special meetings. The position requires knowledge of the County Government and four years of professional experience and an associate's technical/vocational certificate in office management.

Administrative Specialist

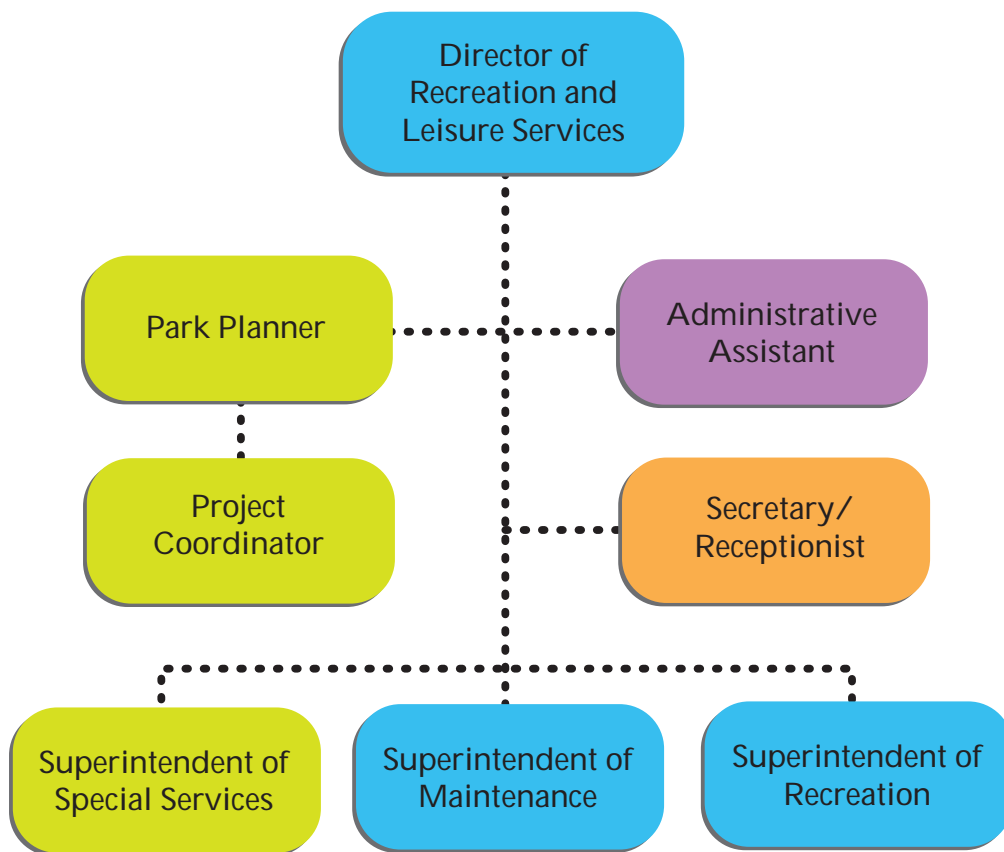
The Administrative Specialist serves as clerical staff throughout the department, assisting the Superintendent and Supervisory staff with administrative and public reports. This position will perform data entry tasks, assist in program registration, collecting program fees, and prepare work orders. The position requires 18 months of vocational or post-high school training and two years of relevant experience.

The Administrative Assistant to the Director and clerks are shown laterally as staff supporting the Director. This represents the Administrative Division. (see figure 4.2)

Park planning, design, and construction responsibilities are organized within the Administrative Division of many recreation departments. If Columbia County undertakes a large capital program, the need within the department for a park planning staff

Proposed Administrative Organization Chart

Figure 4.2



- Existing Staff/New Title
- Existing Full Time
- Existing Part -Time
- Proposed Full-Time

will be a necessity. The Park Planner reports to the Director and is aided by a Project Coordinator; the park planner and coordinator should be landscape architects, architects, or similar design professionals. The Park Planner is responsible for the design and construction implementation of park facilities. Planning and construction implementation are typically completed in association with a design professional such as a landscape architect, an architect, or an engineer who is under contract with the department.

The park planning staff should be capable of completing small design projects in-house and assisting the maintenance staff in determining maintenance plans for park facilities. The planning staff should also be very highly involved in seeking and acting on public input.

Park Planner

The Park Planner is responsible for planning and design work relative to park plans, construction documents, and specifications. The Planner also directs the activities of the county arborist relative to plantings in parks and parkways. The position requires a Bachelor's degree in landscape architecture, architecture, civil engineering, or similar professional training. The Park Planner should have a minimum of ten years experience, of which five years is focused in supervisory experience. The park planner should hold a professional license.

Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator reports to the Park Planner and coordinates and monitors capital projects and projects under construction. He or she distributes plans and specifications to bidders, holds pre-bid conferences, reviews submitted bids, and makes recommendations regarding contractor's awards to the Director. The position requires a Bachelor's degree in landscape architecture, construction management, architecture or public administration with two years of experience in the construction field.

It is important to note that even though they are not discussed in detail in this section, the superintendents of each division are part of the overall administration of the section department. The staff members in these positions comprise the senior management team. The superintendents should meet with the Recreation Advisory Board, business and civic groups and elected or other officials on a regular basis. This is a management responsibility too important to be delegated to support staff.

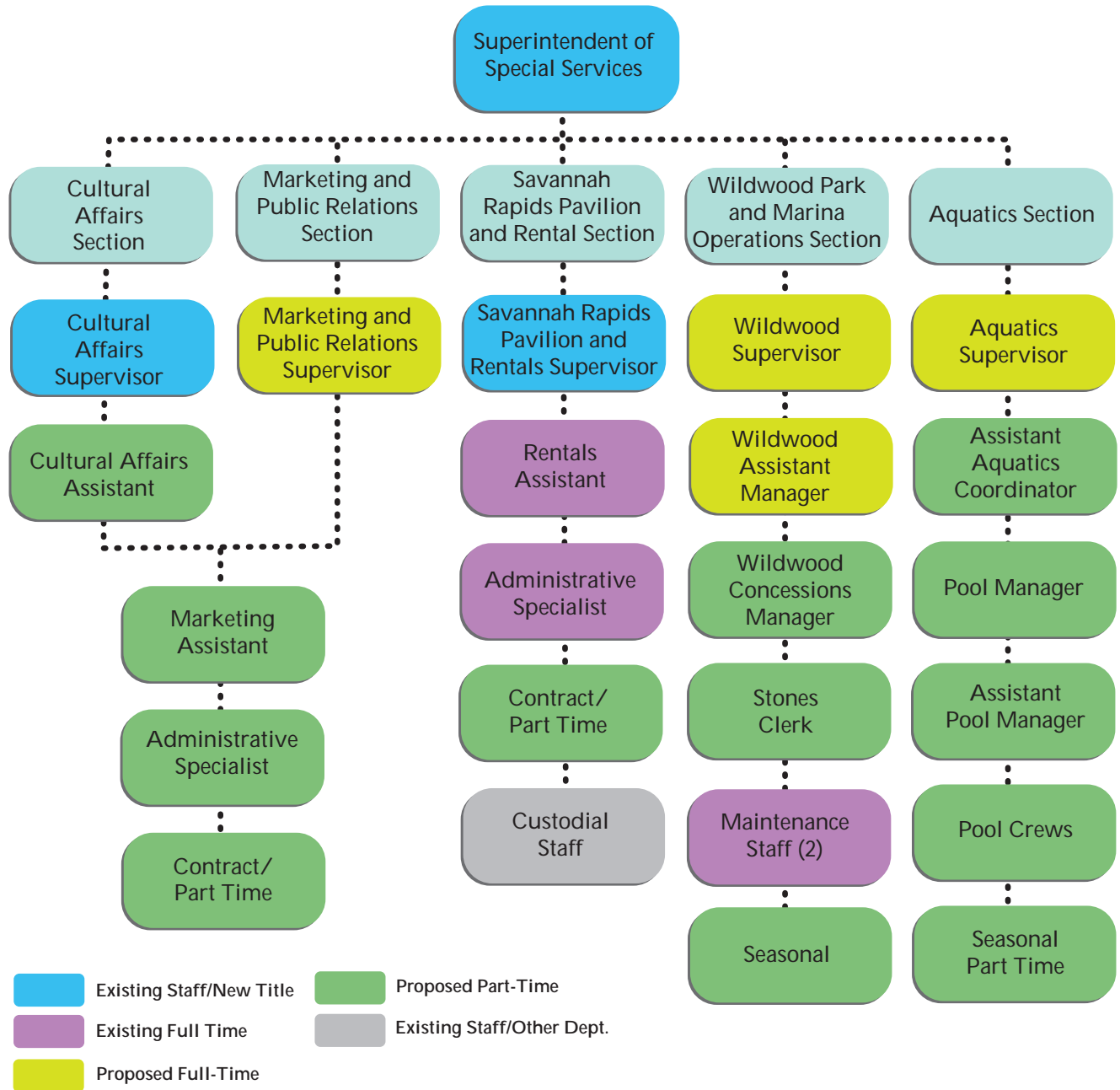
Three separate divisions, each headed by a superintendent, make up the second tier of the department. These divisions are: Special Services Division, Recreation Division, and Maintenance Division. A description of the duties and staff organization for these sections is discussed in the following pages. (see figure 4.3)

Special Services Division

The Special Services Division is a new division. It is responsible for the coordination, planning and overall organization and operation of facilities and programs that generate revenue or require special operating procedures separate from the usual recreation centers and athletic programs. Sections that fall under the Special Services Division are: Marketing and Public Relations, Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Rentals, Wildwood Park and Marina Operations, Aquatics, and Cultural Affairs. (see figure 4.3)

Proposed Special Services Organization Chart

Figure 4.3



Superintendent of Special Services (Recommended position)

The Special Services Superintendent is responsible for managing and directing all aspects of the Special Services Division. This person plans, assigns, supervises, and monitors the activities of the division's staff members and directs and monitors the activities of the division. The superintendent meets directly with the Marketing and Public Relations, Wildwood, Special Events, Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Rentals, and Aquatics section leaders to discuss and resolve issues, assign tasks, and manage budgetary issues within the division. The position requires a Bachelor's degree in recreation or parks administration, public administration, or other related field and four years of administration experience.

One national best practices standards states that: *The agency should have a marketing component with specified functions and a written plan, which includes annual evaluation of the whole marketing component.* (Number 3.3.4.1) To meet these requirements, the following staff positions are recommended:

Marketing and Public Relations Section (recommended section)

All recreation agencies are engaged in marketing whether they realize it or not. This section formalizes the process and will be responsible for such activities as determining the kinds of programs and facilities to provide, deciding where and when to offer programs, setting fees and charges consumers are willing to pay, determining customer service standards, and designing various types of marketing materials (brochures, point of consumption signage, etc.) The marketing staff should conduct annual surveys to determine the level of satisfaction with programs offered and facilities provided by the Department. Surveys can range from program exit surveys to telephone and mailed surveys printed in the newspaper.

- *Marketing and Public Relations Supervisor*

The Supervisor designs and recommends programs related to the marketing programs, the department, and facilities to the public. He or she will coordinate advertising, publications, and act as a liaison to the public in departmental matters. The supervisor reports to the Special Services Superintendent and coordinates the marketing budget needs and staff needs to the superintendent. The supervisor must complete a Bachelor's degree in marketing, public relations or a related field and have a minimum of five years of managerial experience.

- *Marketing Assistant*

The Marketing Assistant reports to the Marketing and Public Relations Supervisor and has a variety of responsibilities including research, analysis and the supervision of clerical staff. The position requires knowledge of the County, special public relations and marketing experience, and a minimum of four years of technical/vocational training.

- *Administrative Specialist*

The Administrative Specialist reports to the Supervisor and assists with administrative and clerical duties. The position requires 18 months of vocational or post-high school training and two years of relevant experience.

- *Contract / Part-time*

Contract or part-time employees may be necessary to execute the marketing and public relations projects and programs.

Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Rentals Section (modified section)

It is recommended that the staff currently managing the Savannah Rapids pavilion become the section to manage all facility rentals. This section will be responsible for scheduling facility use, monitoring and enforcing rental agreements, collecting fees and coordinating with operations and maintenance. The rental section should develop annual operations cost projections for budget development and establish fees based on the fees and charges policy of the Department.

- *Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Rentals Supervisor*

The Supervisor designs and recommends programs related to the marketing and scheduling use of rental facilities and coordination of the facilities within the department. The supervisor reports to the Special Services Director and coordinates the Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Rentals budget and communicates staff needs to the superintendent. The supervisor must complete a bachelor's degree in marketing, public relations or a related field and have a minimum of five years of managerial experience.

- *Rentals Assistant*

The Rentals Assistant reports to the Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Rentals supervisor and has a variety of responsibilities including coordination and scheduling of rental facilities, as well as the supervision of clerical and custodial staff. The position requires knowledge of the County, special public relations and marketing experience, and a minimum of four years of technical/vocational training.

- *Administrative Specialist*

The Administrative Specialist reports to the Supervisor and assists with administrative and clerical duties. The position requires 18 months of vocational or post-high school training and two years of relevant experience.

- *Contract Labor/ Part-time Help*

Contract labor or part-time help may be necessary to execute the Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Rentals projects and programs.

- *Custodian*

Custodians perform general upkeep of the Savannah Rapids Pavilion and rental property including cleaning, maintaining and stocking supplies. The individuals must be 18 years of age or older; no experience is necessary. This position may be served by contract or part-time labor.

Wildwood Park and Marina Operations Section (recommended)

Another facility that should be managed as a revenue center for the Department is a Wildwood Park. Expansion of this park and a change in the management strategy should result in a dramatic increase in revenue production from the county's largest

park. Located on a regional destination lake offering water-based activities and overnight accommodations, this facility can serve as a catalyst for improved revenue generation.

Many parks departments across the country operate marinas, camping and large day use facilities on a for-profit basis. There is adequate room at Wildwood Park to construct a marina to serve both local and regional boaters and to host major tournament events. Marinas operated by the recreation departments can be self-managed or managed by a concessionaire. In either case, the county should receive a positive cash flow from the marina, control the real estate and have a formal operating policy.

A feasibility study should be prepared to determine the size and makeup of the marina, the cost of construction, and the potential for revenue generation. The feasibility study should also address the support facilities needed to provide the synergy necessary to maximize special event and revenue opportunities. Support facilities can include camping facilities, cabins or lodge facilities, rental buildings and pavilions, bicycling trails and pathways, as well as day camp and specialized activity facilities.

Wildwood Park and Marina Operations Staff:

- *Wildwood Supervisor*

The Supervisor designs and recommends programs related to the environment, prepares educational guide booklets and assists with special events. He or she is also responsible for management of all Wildwood facilities, programs and budgetary matters. The supervisor reports to the Special Services Director and coordinates the annual budget and staff needs to the superintendent. The supervisor communicates with visitors and conducts workshops and special studies. The supervisor must complete a bachelor's degree in recreation, horticulture, forestry, natural sciences or a related field and have a minimum of five years of managerial experience.

- *Wildwood Assistant Manager*

The Assistant Manager will assist the Wildwood Supervisor in the park and is also responsible for marina and water-based activities if a marina is added to the park. He or she will promote the marina to the community and special interest groups, be responsible for organizing community-wide water based events and conduct water safety workshops for volunteers who work at the marina. The position requires a bachelor's degree in recreation, natural sciences or a related field, or a combination of experience and training that provides the knowledge and skills to perform the job.

- *Wildwood Concessions Manager*

The Concessions Manager is responsible for handling money, maintaining inventory control, and supervision of concessions attendants. He or she must have good math skills and must possess, or be qualified to obtain, a Columbia County Health Department Food Handlers' permit. This staff person can be a contract employee.

- *Stores Clerk*

The Stores Clerk maintains proper inventory levels and receives inventory, equipment, and other supplies and materials. The position requires a high school education and one year of relevant experience. This staff person can be a contract employee.

- *Wildwood Maintenance Crew Leader*

The Parks Maintenance Crew Leader operates a variety of equipment and performs manual tasks related to Wildwood's public service activities. This designation includes supervisory authority and responsibility for supervising Parks Maintenance Crew Members. The Wildwood Maintenance Crew Leader reports daily to the Wildwood Supervisor. When special projects need to be completed, or special maintenance is needed, the Wildwood crew leader will report to the Superintendent of Maintenance. The position requires a high school diploma and one year of relevant work experience. Special understanding in the maintenance of Wildwood's unique facilities should be considered in candidates for this position.

- *Wildwood Maintenance Crew Member*

Maintenance Crew Members perform manual, unskilled and semi-skilled labor activities of routine and moderate difficulty. The position requires a grade school education and good knowledge of general maintenance and repair rules and standards.

Aquatics Section (recommended section)

As pools are added to the Columbia County Park system, an Aquatics Section should be added to the Special Services Division.

- *Aquatics Supervisor (recommended position)*

The Aquatics Supervisor oversees pool managers, lifeguards, cashiers and pool attendants. The individual must be a Certified Pool Operator and must have current certifications in Community C.P.R. and Standard First Aid. He or she must also be at least 21 years old, have extensive training in water safety and swimming skills, and have a minimum of four years of experience in pool management, lifeguarding or a related area. The Aquatics Supervisor should hold a bachelor's degree in recreation or similar field and have two years of pool management experience.

- *Assistant Aquatics Coordinator (recommended position)*

The Assistant Aquatics Coordinator works under the direct supervision of the Aquatics Coordinator and the Recreation Manager. He or she supervises pool managers, lifeguards, cashiers, and pool attendants and conducts daily on-site facility inspections. The position requires extensive water safety training and swimming skills, along with requisite certifications. Assistant Aquatics Coordinators must be at least 21 years of age and college graduates. This staff person can be a contract employee.

- *Pool Manager (one per pool)*

Under the direction of the Assistant Aquatics Coordinator, the Pool Managers are responsible for administering the pool program at an assigned location. Duties include supervision of events, training and supervising pool staff, public relations, safety programs, cash management, and building and grounds maintenance. Pool managers must be trained in water safety and swimming skills and have lifeguarding and/or WSI Certification. They must also possess Community C.P.R., Standard First Aid, and Red Cross (or similar) Lifeguard Certification. This staff person can be a contract employee.

- *Assistant Pool Manager*

Assistant Pool Managers provide support for the pool manager. Support responsibilities include monitoring the pool equipment and filtering system for proper chemical levels, helping to supervise crowds and enforce safety rules, and helping to coordinate schedules of pool employees. Assistant Pool Managers must be trained in water safety and have a current lifeguarding and/or WSI certification as well as community CPR and standard First Aid certifications. This staff person can be a contract employee.

- *Stores Clerk*

The Stores Clerk maintains proper inventory levels and receives inventory, equipment, and other supplies and materials. The position requires a high school education and one year of relevant experience. This staff person can be a contract employee.

- *Concessions Manager*

The Concessions Manager is responsible for handling money, maintaining inventory control and supervision of concessions attendants. The individual must have good math skills and must possess, or be qualified to obtain, a Columbia County Health Department Food Handlers' permit. This staff person can be a contract employee.

- *Concessions Assistant*

The Concessions Assistant serves patrons and assists the concessions manager with inventory and with keeping the concessions area in a clean and hygienic condition. The Assistant will also fill drink and candy machines and be responsible for keeping accurate inventories and accounting of money. The individual must be at least 18 years old, have good math skills and be able to work independently. This staff person can be a part-time employee.

- *Water Safety Instructor*

In addition to lifeguard duties, Water Safety Instructors conduct swimming classes for the public. The instructors must have current Water Safety Instructor Certification, Lifeguard Training Certification, Community C.P.R., and Standard First Aid Certification. They must also obtain Red Cross Certification. This staff person can be a contract employee.

- *Swimming Pool Cashier*

Swimming Pool Cashiers operate cash registers and handle money. They must have a thorough knowledge of aquatic programs and be able to communicate this information to pool patrons. The position requires completion of the 10th grade. First Aid and C.P.R. Certification is desirable. This staff person can be a part-time employee.

- *Lifeguard*

Lifeguards prevent accidents through enforcement of policies, rules, regulations, and ordinances governing the conduct of swimmers. They respond to emergencies and rescue people in trouble, resuscitate swimmers as needed and administer first aid. Lifeguards must have current Lifeguard Training Certification, Community C.P.R., Red Cross, and Standard Certifications. This staff person can be a part-time employee.

- *Pool Attendant*

Pool attendants are responsible for the cleanliness of pool facilities including the deck area, outside the pool area, concessions area, and restrooms. The position requires completion of the seventh grade.

Cultural Affairs Section (recommended section)

This division is responsible for managing the development, implementation and operation of a comprehensive program of cultural, visual and performing arts, and county-wide special events. The arts have always been seen as the essence of culture and as a force that contributes to community pride and social cohesion. The arts are increasingly viewed as contributing to the strengthening of local economies.

Special events are recreation programs that depart from the normal routine and require special planning and operational skills. They include countywide events, such as Fourth of July festivals, and are designed to actively involve all who attend. Many recreation programs are defined by the special events that they coordinate and create a strong public support.

Special events, whether they are a music program or a major athletic tournament, have many direct impacts on both the community and the recreation staff. Months of behind-the-scenes work, such as booking acts and scheduling officials to judge contests or sporting events, is required. In many cases, the maintenance staff will be needed to build props, relocate park equipment and work additional hours for pre-event and post-event clean-up. Maintenance staffs are also asked to set up, operate and break down special equipment for many events.

All of the work needed to stage a special event is in addition to normal staff duties of maintaining safe and clean parks. However, the improved quality of life and financial impacts on the community as a whole are rewards for the large effort that goes into special events. The Department should continue to offer a wide variety of special events but seek additional assistance in the execution of the events.

- *Cultural Affairs Supervisor*

The Supervisor oversees, coordinates and develops cultural affairs, arts, performing arts programs and special events offered to the public. Responsibilities include working with the public, publicizing events and writing reports including financial documents. The supervisor reports to the Special Services Director and coordinates the marketing budget needs and staff needs to the superintendent. The supervisor must complete a bachelor's degree in performing arts, arts, recreation programming with an emphasis in cultural arts or a related field and have a minimum of five years of managerial experience.

- *Cultural Affairs Assistant*

The Cultural Affairs Assistant reports to the Cultural Affairs Supervisor and has a variety of responsibilities including assisting the supervisor in programming and executing the cultural affairs programs as well as the supervision of clerical staff. The position requires knowledge of the County, special public relations and marketing experience and a minimum of four years of technical/vocational training. This can be a contract employee until the workload grows to a level requiring a full-time position.

- *Administrative Specialist*

The Administrative Specialist reports to the Supervisor and assists with administrative and clerical duties. The position requires 18 months of vocational or post-high school training and two years of relevant experience. This can be a contract employee until the workload grows to a level requiring a full-time position.

- *Contract Labor/ Part-time help*

Contract labor or part-time help may be necessary to execute the cultural affairs programs. This position could also involve existing staff to help build stage sets, collecting tickets, manage parking or similar duties.

Recreation Division

Analysis

The Recreation Division is currently focused in programming youth athletics – most notably baseball and softball. Section 7 Recreational Programming features matrices of the programs currently offered in Columbia County including athletic programs, special events, cultural arts programs, therapeutic recreation and senior adult programs.

Although the value of public recreation beyond youth athletics is perceived most clearly as everyday fun, it is not always highly valued for its contribution toward a focus for countywide leisure services and its impact on the quality of life, tourism and the economic development of the county. In the profession of recreation, it is understood that a high quality delivery system provides recreation programs that not only benefit individuals but also provide opportunities for community development while enhancing livability and quality of life. With a long term strategic recreation program plan, the Recreation Division can plan for effective, simultaneous and complementary growth in all sections of the Recreation and Leisure Services Department.

The character of Columbia County is one of transition — growing from a rural to a bedroom community and into an urbanized and mobile community. Based on input gathered from the public throughout the planning process, Columbia County's citizens have expressed a desire for increased non-athletic recreation programs that stimulate the mind and body to renew the human spirit. To respond to the demand for diverse public recreation programs, technology and techniques must be improved so that communication is improved both internally within the Recreation Division and externally with the public. Through improved communications, the department will be able to offer programs that satisfy the public's desire for non-athletic programs.

Level of Service of the Recreation Division

Determining the desired level of service by the community is an important function of any city department. In the survey conducted as part of this master planning effort and detailed in Section 3. of this plan, 41% and 48% respectively disagreed that the number and the type of programs offered by the Recreation Department met their needs. This is not to say that the majority of people who responded felt their needs were not being met since 29% and 25% respectively stated that they did not know. Most communities prefer that the respondents who agree with the type and numbers of programs being offered represent over 50% of the population.

Since the numbers generated by the survey are below 50%, the Department needs to re-evaluate the current programming mix and determine what changes need to be made. The Department will also have to look at time constraints and staffing levels to determine if adding additional programs is possible. Some underachieving programs may need to be dropped in order to free up staff time for new programs. In filling staff vacancies or expanding staff, special skills that are missing may be targeted in the hiring process.

Communication and Public Input

Communication in any working situation is critical. Currently, internal communication is better than communication with the public; however, most areas could use improvement. Although regular staff meetings are held within the Recreation Division, the meetings are not focused on improved delegation, empowerment or creative vision. The current staff is highly focused on youth sports and often does not think of activities that serve a population with more diverse recreation interests.

Public input indicates that members of the community are not always aware of program offerings, costs and times. The primary marketing tools for recreation programs are the local newspapers, flyers and word-of-mouth. Although this is an acceptable vehicle and is perceived as such by the public, it is not effectively reaching the total population. There is no formal budget for additional marketing of recreation services, nor have any creative ways been employed to finance marketing efforts.

The overall quality of services has suffered because staff members have dedicated large amounts of time and energy to the youth athletics programs. This practice is common in communities that have a long past history of youth athletics, where the recreation department provides for youth athletics because this is the level of service that the community expects, and that this level of service is what the recreation department is most familiar with. As the community grows and citizens begin to expect an expanded program and facility offering, the recreation department must play catch-up. The recreation department must continually solicit the public's input to determine what the desires and needs of the community are. The department must also be able to educate the public in potential recreation offerings to help the public make educated decisions.

Volunteers and Partnerships

The contribution that could be made by volunteers has been ignored with the exception of coaches largely because it has not been an effective tool used by the department in the past, so there is no precedence for a good volunteer program. Coordination with other recreation providers such as schools, athletic associations, the civic groups, neighborhood groups and specialized professional organizations can also be improved. No formal joint use agreements or contract services details have been developed to facilitate coordination with such organizations. As the department is moving towards becoming the primary recreation provider in Columbia County, volunteer programs and partnerships with the aforementioned recreation providers should be explored to offer the citizens of Columbia County a more well-rounded recreation service offering.

The provision of high quality recreation services must occur in an environment that depends on pre-planning for needed services and an adequate evaluation system for

services provided or planned. High quality services are also the result of organized and appropriate accounting of cost/revenue and an effective marketing plan. These tools are not in place within the current Recreation Division. In addition to these tools, there should be methods in place to determine unmet recreation needs within the Columbia County community. This master plan report is one step in the right direction for the County, although continued revenue studies and a forum for citizen input into recreation facility and program offerings should continue to be explored beyond this report.

Program Diversity

Based on the survey distributed as part of this planning process, 41% of those questioned stated that programs should be improved, while only 29% stated that programs were adequate. The survey results indicate that the activities in which citizens most frequently and actively participate are arts and crafts, concerts and special events, running and walking, swimming, and hiking. The survey results also indicate that citizens want greenways, biking paths and trails, neighborhood parks, passive parks, picnic facilities and an indoor aquatics facility. This suggests that citizens do want more diverse activities, more non-athletics and more indoor and outdoor spaces for both organized and non-organized activities. Additionally, citizens want more clustered recreation facilities for tournaments and special events.

The current program offering does not reflect the rich diversity of cultures and abilities existing within the county. Without the development of new programs, multi-cultural appreciation, education and events will not expand in the future. For example, the existing services are not provided in a manner which enables the citizens of the county who are physically “challenged” to participate together with their neighbors who are physically “able.” The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that program offerings be considered as critically as physical accessibility to facilities and sites.

The existing Recreation Department’s fees and charges are perceived by the master planning team as being low. Most of the program fees do not cover the actual cost of the program. Our experience with recreation programs indicates that citizens are willing to pay higher fees and charges if the programs and activities are high quality and considered worth a premium charge. In addition to raising program fees to cover actual costs, registration procedures for programs should be improved through a computerized process that would also facilitate data collection regarding the users.

Modern lifestyles and trends do not appear to have been considered when planning the existing programs. The fact that, in many cases, families either have two working parents or are single parent families does not seem to have influenced the program offerings. Community input revealed that local residents do not feel that programs and events are always offered to accommodate their lifestyle. For instance, a desire was expressed for more “close to home” recreation so that public recreation programs do not always require transportation. A need and desire for weekend and evening programs to allow families to participate together was also evident.

This division consolidates all recreation programming services under one superintendent and oversees the more traditional programs and services offered by public recreation agencies. These services include adult and youth athletics, community recreation centers, playgrounds, mobile facilities (show mobiles, etc.), recreation programs, swim-

ming pools and day camp programs. The sections this division is responsible for are: Community Recreation Centers and Recreation Programs.

Determining what facilities need to be built to reach new markets and to accommodate a growing population should be addressed on an annual basis by the marketing and public relations staff. The Director can then formulate a strategy to bring new programs to the public. The level of service will not improve and keep pace with population growth without an annual assessment of program effectiveness and staffing needs. Recommendations to add a Cultural Affairs Division and to reorganize the existing staff should be a positive first step in meeting the diverse needs of the community. The development of park program districts discussed below should also provide a positive change in the department.

District Organization

In order to provide the citizens of Columbia County the level of service that they clearly desire (See survey results, Section 3.), the Recreation Division should reorganize into programming districts. The Districts are described as follows:

District 1 – Northeast/Riverside

District 2 – East-Central/Patriots

District 3 – South/Grovetown-Harlem

District 4 – West/Appling

**Programming at Wildwood Park will be the responsibility of the Special Services Section, Wildwood Supervisor.*

Reorganization will reduce travel time for the public to register for recreation program offerings, and staff will be stationed closer to the parks and facilities that they program. This recommendation will also increase the overall productivity and effectiveness of the programmers. Empowering the recreation staff with more responsibilities and flexibility in their district's programming will ensure that the needs of the communities within the districts are being met. Additionally, these districts will allow the department to grow in proportion with the population they serve. (see figure 4.4)

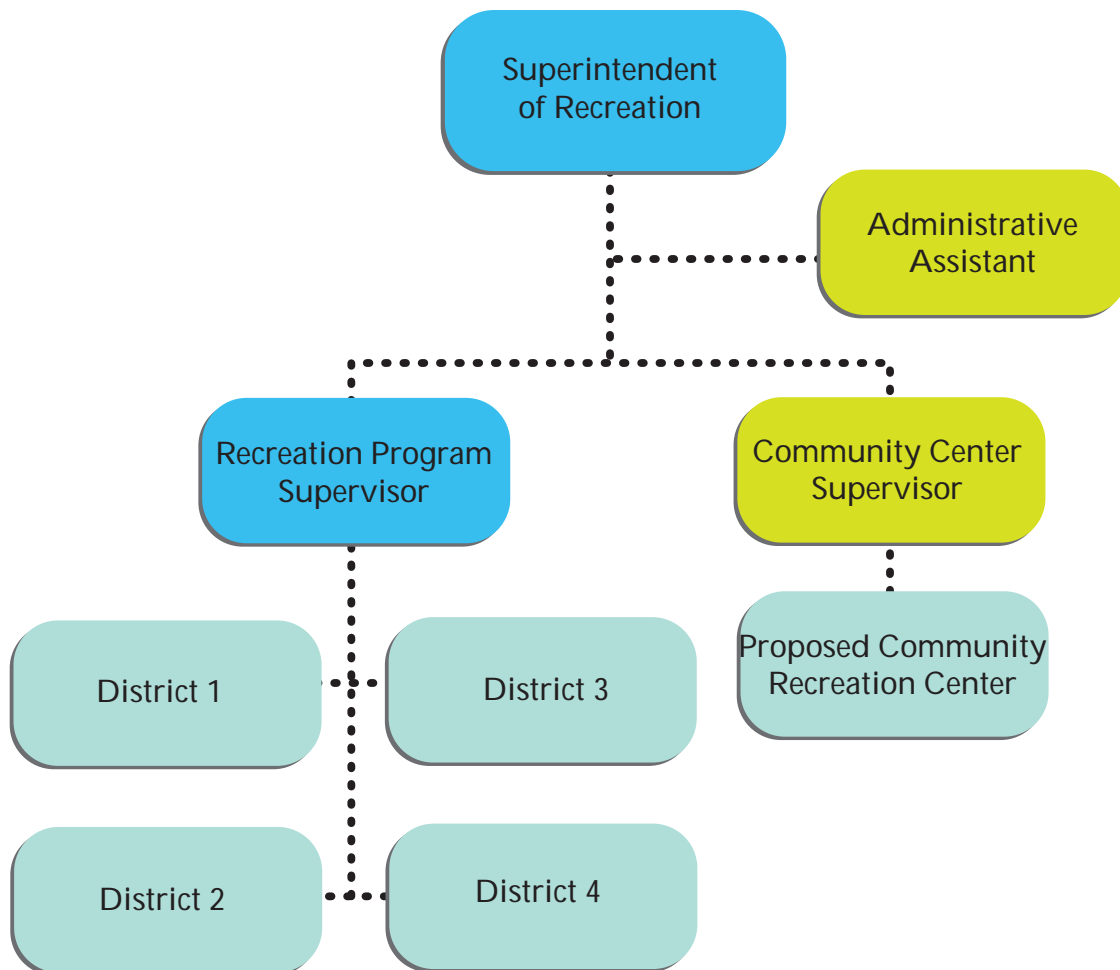
- *Superintendent of Recreation (Recommended position)*

The Recreation Superintendent is responsible for managing and directing all aspects of the Recreation Division. This person plans, assigns, supervises and monitors the activities of the division's staff members and directs and monitors the activities of the division. The superintendent meets directly with the Community Recreation Centers Managers and District Recreation Managers to discuss and resolve issues, assign tasks, and manage budgetary issues within the division. The position requires a bachelor's degree in recreation or parks administration, public administration or other related field and four years of administration experience.

Each district will feature a team consisting of a manager, a district athletics programmer and a district recreation programmer. Part-time and contract labor will be added as necessary to facilitate executing the programs that are designed by the district supervisors and programmers. At the beginning of this reorganization period, the manager may direct both athletic and non-athletic programs. As the level of programs offered by the department grow, additional staff positions should be created and filled as described in the following text.

Proposed Recreation Organization Chart

Figure 4.4



Existing Staff/New Title
 Proposed Full-Time

Community Centers will be run under the Community Centers Section, headed by a Community Center Supervisor. Each Community Center will have its own staff including a manager, assistant manager, senior staff assistant, staff assistant/programmer, contract programmer and custodial staff. The only existing Community Center that will need staffing at the present will be Patriots Park's Community Center. The future Community Centers described in this report will all be staffed similarly once constructed.

The Community rental facilities currently offered by the County, Eubanks Blanchard, Savannah Rapids, and the Bessie Thomas (Euchee Creek) senior center will all be managed by the Special Services Division.

Community Recreation Centers Section

This section includes the operation and programming of the Department's existing community centers. As the additional community centers recommended in this study come on line, they will be part of this section.

There are four existing Community Centers as described by the Columbia County Recreation and Leisure Services Division. Two of these Community Centers, Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Eubanks Blanchard Community Center, function as public meeting/rental spaces. The Savannah Rapids Pavilion has a full-time staff and also houses offices of the Community and Leisure Services Department of the Columbia County government. The Eubanks Blanchard Community Center is a rental facility with a kitchen and restrooms that is not staffed and is only open when rented by the public. The Bessie Thomas (or Euchee Creek Community) Center is another Community Center that primarily acts as a senior activity center and hot meals distribution office. This building has a full-time senior center/public transit staff. The facilities in these three centers are not typically described as Community Centers in common recreation nomenclature. These facilities would more commonly be referred to as Community Rooms and a Senior Center, respectively.

Patriots Park's Recreation Center is, however, identified by standard parks and recreation nomenclature as a Community Center. This Patriots Park facility houses recreation and fitness facilities, as well as meeting rooms and offices. In Section 5. of this document, recommendations for future community center development are provided.

For the purposes of this report, a Community Center of this nature will be referred to as "Community Recreation Centers", while the Community Rooms and Senior Centers will be collectively be referred to as "Community Centers".

Currently there is a need to add two full-time Assistant Directors (one at each location) at the Patriots Park and Euchee Creek (Bessie Thomas) community centers. The full-time Directors at the centers are all very dedicated individuals who operate the centers with part-time staff. Not having a full-time Assistant Director within the Department limits the evening programming and the supervision provided at the centers. The current operations utilize uncertified staff with limited training, increasing liability for the city with respect to program and site emergencies.

The recommendations in Section 6. of adding two large community recreation centers will require the hiring of a manager and assistant manager at each center as well as additional part-time staff. The Aquatics Supervisor proposed for the Special Services Division can direct the activities of aquatic programs at all future aquatics facilities located at the community recreation centers. The development of these centers will impact maintenance needs for contract custodians and will introduce the need for pools service staff. Staff descriptions for community center staff are outlined below: (see figure 4.5)

- *Community Recreation Center Manager*

Community center managers perform administrative and supervisory work in marketing, promoting, planning, coordinating and overseeing all general recreation activities and programs that take place in their assigned community center. They also supervise the development of comprehensive recreation services for their assigned work areas. The managers are responsible for budget and cash controls at the center. They report directly to the Recreation Superintendent. The position requires a bachelor's degree in recreation, physical education, marketing or education with three years of relevant professional and supervisory experience.

- *Community Recreation Center Assistant Manager*

Community Center assistant managers supervise, coordinate and develop programs offered to the public. Responsibilities include working with the public, publicizing events and writing reports including financial documents. The position requires a bachelor's degree in recreation or allied field and one year of experience.

- *Programmer (Contract)*

This programmer is hired on a contract basis to direct recreation programs in the center. The programmers can range from dance to cooking classes. These contract programmers shall demonstrate a special skill in the program that they will operate.

- *Custodian*

Custodians perform general upkeep of the community center including cleaning and maintaining and stocking supplies. The individuals must be 18 years of age or older; no experience is necessary. This position may be served by contract or part-time labor.

Recreation Programs Section

This section includes the operation and programming of the Department's existing and proposed parks. There is a need to restructure the current recreation programmers to conform to the district management philosophy discussed. Staffing needs to implement programming by districts are as listed below: (see figure 4.6)

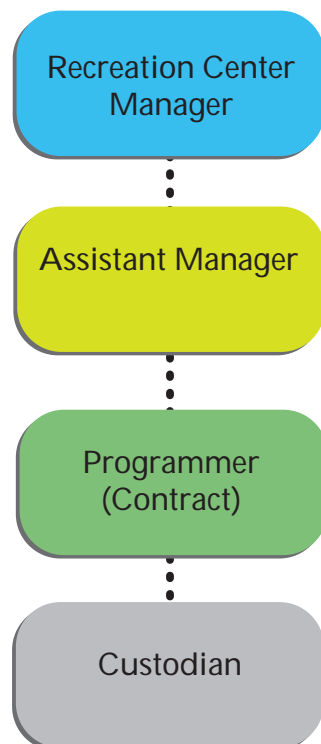
- *District Manager**

District Managers perform administrative and supervisory work in marketing, promoting, planning, coordinating and overseeing all general recreation activities and athletic programs in their district. They also supervise the development of comprehensive recreation services for assigned work areas. The managers report directly to

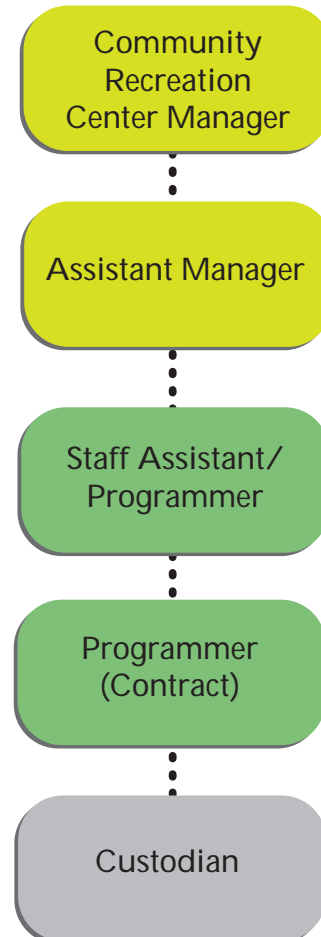
Community Recreation Centers Organization (Typical for each proposed center) and Existing Patriots Recreation Center

Figure 4.5

Patriots Park Recreation Center



Typical Recreation Center

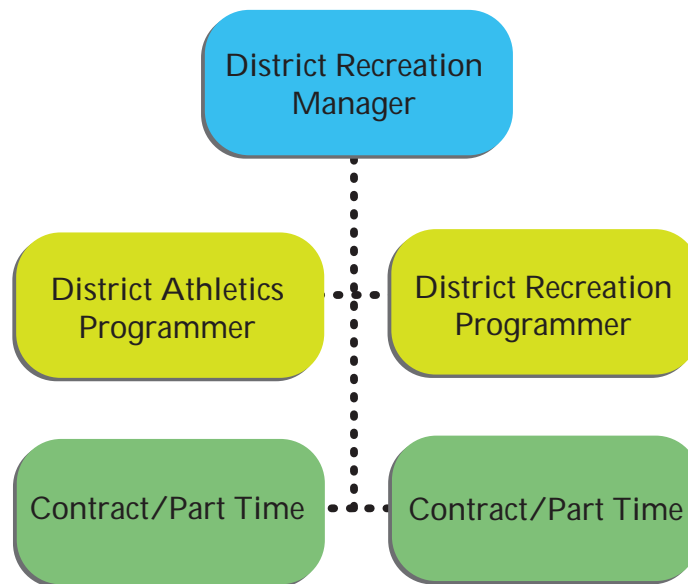


- Existing Staff/New Title
- Proposed Full-Time
- Proposed Part-Time
- Existing Staff/Other Dept.

District Recreation Organization

(Typical for districts 1-4)

Figure 4.6



- Existing Staff/New Title
- Proposed Full-Time
- Proposed Part-Time

the Recreation Superintendent. The position requires a bachelor's degree in recreation, physical education or similar field with five years of relevant professional and supervisory experience.

- *District Athletics Programmer**

Team sports for youth and adults are the primary focus of this programmer — planning, organizing and coordinating league play for a variety of sports year-round. A selection of individual sports offerings should also be included. Responsibilities include working with the public, publicizing programs and writing reports including financial documents. The position requires a bachelor's degree in leisure services or related field, and experience in recreational programming.

- *District Recreation Programmer**

The primary function of this programmer is the operation of the Department's after-school programs during the school year and of day camp and other programs during the summer. Responsibilities include working with the public, publicizing programs and writing reports including financial documents. The position requires a bachelor's degree in leisure services or related field, and experience in after-school and summer programming.

**These managerial positions will be combined as one staff position for each district until the demands brought on by the public and/or new facilities in that district demand that the managerial duties are divided into two positions: one for athletics programming, another for after school and summer programs.*

- *Part-time/ Contract Staff*

Part-time/seasonal staff members will be assigned to assist the district managers at times of the year when peak program enrollment demands. These positions will be hired as necessary.

Maintenance Division

This division is currently responsible for keeping all of the Department's natural resources and park facilities in safe and good condition, for assisting in the planning and development of new parks and facilities and for ensuring the safety of all who use them. Two of the CAPRA fundamental standards for operating a quality recreation agency address the responsibilities of the Operations and Planning Division:

There shall be a written maintenance and operations plan for management of the Agency's park and recreation areas, facilities, and equipment.

There shall be written environmentally sound standards and procedures for development and maintenance of the Agency's natural resources, with particular attention to protection and preservation of especially sensitive land and water areas.

Current Columbia County Maintenance Organization

The Maintenance Section employs approximately 15 full-time people. Six to eight part-time or seasonal staff members are added each year during the spring, summer and fall months. The Superintendent responsible for the Maintenance Section is assisted by one

Park Maintenance Foreman and three Park Maintenance Crew Leaders, nine Park Maintenance Crew workers and a Night Watchman (see figure 4.7).

The Maintenance Services work area is responsible for general upkeep and repair of the Columbia County parks and facilities consisting of nearly 1,217 acres (975 of which are contained in Wildwood Park and 27 in the Grovetown City Parks) of land and an assortment of recreation facilities.

Currently, there are three crews of four full-time staff and 2-3 seasonal workers that are based in three parks within Columbia County. The Patriots Park crew is responsible for Patriots Park's exterior facilities only. The Blanchard Park crew is responsible for maintenance in Blanchard, Appling, Newmantown Road and Goodale Parks, as well as the Eubanks Blanchard Community Center and the Euchee Creek Community Center. The Riverside Park crew is responsible for maintenance in Riverside, Roberts and Reed Creek Parks as well as the Savannah Rapids Pavilion grounds. The Parks staff at Wildwood is responsible for maintenance within the Wildwood Park grounds. The crews are responsible for mowing and grooming

Vehicle maintenance is performed by the Columbia County Central Shop. Mowers and other off-road wheeled equipment is maintained under contract from either the manufacturer or the sales or lease agency. The Patriots Park Gymnasium and Recreation and Leisure Services offices use contract janitorial service to clean the interiors, although Parks Maintenance staff is responsible for stocking disposable goods such as toilet paper and light bulbs.

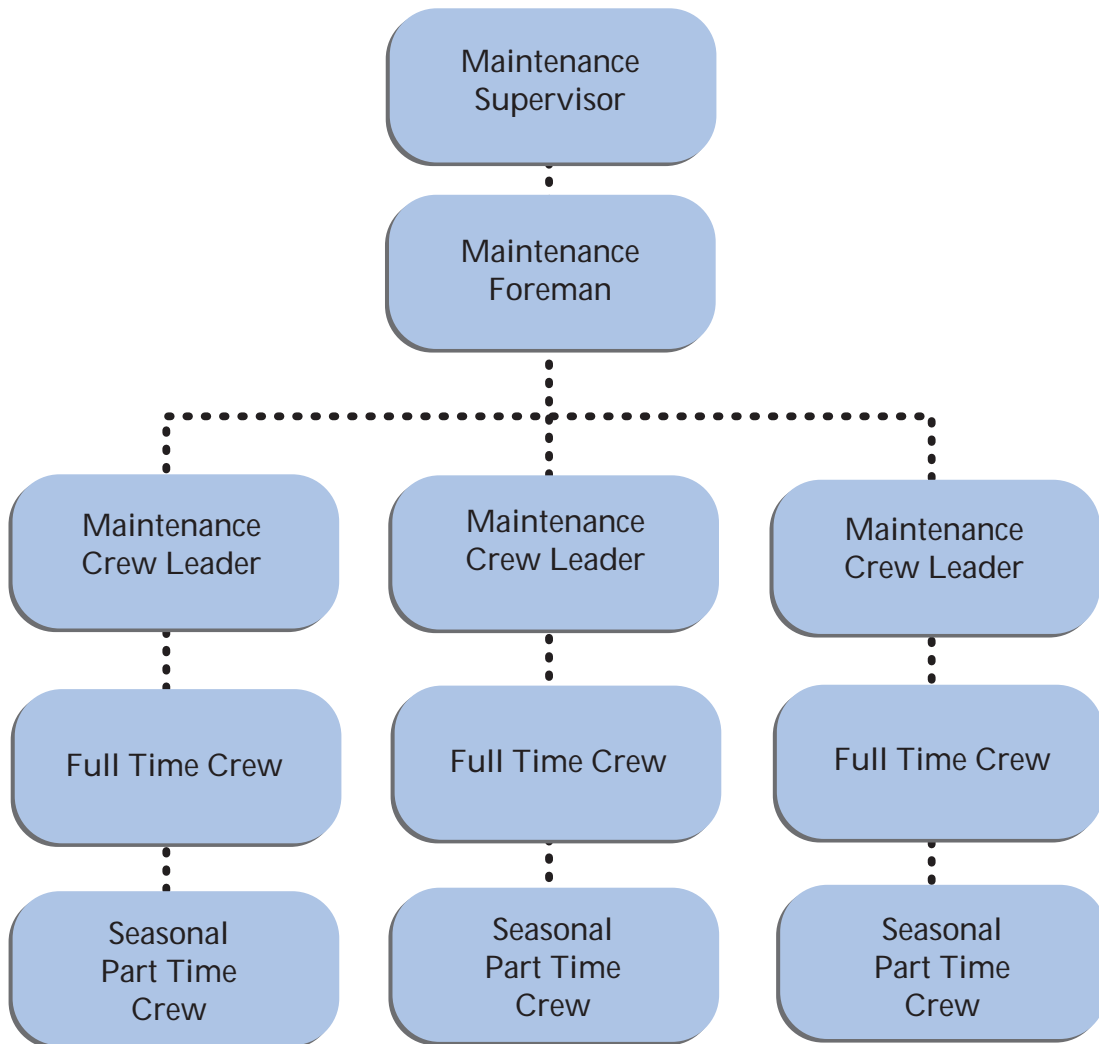
Maintenance Services Section

Input received at public meetings indicates that maintenance of existing parks is a high priority for members of the community. To best respond to this need, it is recommended that the maintenance work areas adopt new management processes and improved work techniques. The current work schedule to direct grounds maintenance activity is not implemented in a manner that ensures consistent level of care and operating efficiency. Additionally, it is the observation of the planning team that work methods being used in the maintenance area are symptomatic of an overall need to improve the effectiveness of supervision at various levels. More importance should be placed on the management methodology and reporting systems as they relate to work output and performance. New training programs to be developed should focus on the management of personnel and the maintenance of parks and facilities.

In an effort to meet the public expectation for improved conditions at existing parks, it is recommended that the maintenance area be restructured and that a mission be clearly defined. Interviews revealed that most of the staff knew that they were expected to keep parks safe and clean, but equipment, salary and workloads were problem areas that need to be addressed to improve morale. To help remedy this, one step is for the maintenance staff to develop a mission statement. By participating in the development of the mission, individuals gain a greater understanding of what they are expected to accomplish and they have a higher likelihood of performing at that level. Suggested starting points for consideration and discussion are:

Current Maintenance Organization Chart

Figure 4.7



To provide safe and efficiently maintained parks, park grounds, facilities, trails and open space for the general public and employees

Or

To support the overall mission of the Recreation and Leisure Services Department by maintaining all parks and park facilities to meet the basic operational needs and program requirements of the park users

A mission similar to the examples given above can be actualized by focusing maintenance efforts on the following areas:

- Planned or corrective maintenance—scheduled projects to repair or restore a park or facility
- Preventive maintenance—scheduled maintenance activity designed to extend the serviceable life of equipment and systems thus reducing breakdowns, repairs and associated costs
- Routine maintenance—unscheduled day-to-day repairs

In order to meet public expectations it is critical that a communication link be established between the park users and facility support staff. It is essential that key maintenance personnel conduct systematic evaluations of parks and facilities. The results of the inspections coupled with historic repair data will be helpful in developing the priorities for Capital Improvement Projects.

Additionally, to improve the level of maintenance of parks and facilities, the Division should:

- Reorganize the maintenance work area and create five grounds maintenance districts (see district map figure 4.8):

District 1 – Northeast/Riverside

District 2 – East-Central/Patriots

District 3 – South/Grovetown-Harlem

District 4 – West/Appling

District 5 - Wildwood

This will reduce travel time, and crews will be stationed closer to the parks that they maintain. This recommendation will also reduce non-productive time and increase the overall productivity of individual crews. Roving crews also reduce the cost of staffing each park and the capital outlay, and they can ensure that maintenance standards for each park are more uniformly implemented. Additionally, emergency situations can be addressed with the least possible disruption to the routine schedule.

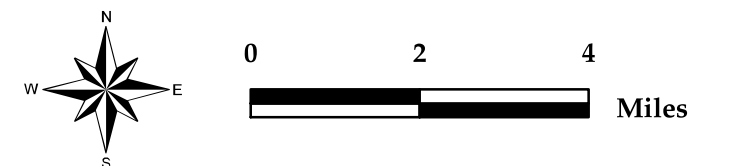
- Conduct an orientation session for the entire Maintenance Services Section to discuss new District assignments. This session should be primarily interactive and focus on the input of the maintenance staff regarding needed equipment and special maintenance needs of individual parks and facilities.
- Ensure that the arboriculture/landscape maintenance area becomes a mainstream function of the Maintenance Section including scheduling, crew sizes and overall consistency with other maintenance responsibilities.

Columbia County, GA Parks & Recreation Master Plan

*Population Density Per Acre
by Block Group*



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- Contract upkeep and mowing of turf areas outside of ball field fencing.
The maintenance of park turf areas represents a small portion of the acreage mowed by the maintenance work area. However, it is very time consuming and the quality of the work is frequently impacted by weather, absenteeism, special events and equipment breakdowns. The manpower assigned to non-field turf mowing can be used more effectively in general grounds maintenance. All non-field turf mowing should be contracted by a mowing contractor during the growing season.

- Contract custodial services for all indoor facilities.
The custodial staff should be reassigned to assist with general maintenance needs. Additionally, facilities could be cleaned by private contractors at times when the facilities are closed. Setups and custodial requirements for special meetings or functions during operating hours would be handled by the Superintendent of Maintenance. This recommendation would also result in a considerable saving on the purchase of equipment and supplies and eliminate unnecessary overtime hours.

- Develop an adopt-a-park program and seek donations equal to the maintenance cost of specific parks or beautification projects.
This recommendation will provide additional funds to purchase plants and materials required for ornamental gardens. Additionally, businesses that benefit the most from having a beautifully planted and maintained park or median near their establishment should be willing to assume at least some portion of the maintenance cost.

- Develop volunteer groups to assist with gardening, litter control, and special events.
The development of a corps of volunteers should increase the visual quality of the parks. Volunteers could assist the maintenance staff with litter control and the planting and maintenance of annual flowers and plants. This would allow the staff to devote more attention to higher maintenance needs.

- Consider creating a special events crew to coordinate and facilitate all events staged in park venues.
This crew could be assigned as team members from various crews on a sign-up basis, and the staff members who sign up should be eligible for overtime pay or comp-time compensation. The special events crew may also be assembled of volunteers, contract labor, or part-time/seasonal workers to alleviate the workload on the full-time maintenance crew members.

- Upgrade equipment; purchase crew cab trucks and trailers to transport crews and maintenance equipment.
Interviews with Maintenance staff indicated that there is a need for additional equipment to meet the maintenance needs and standards set for the park system. Equipment should be purchased that can be transported on trailers by roving crews.

- Communications within the Maintenance department should be reviewed, and a newer method of telecommunications should be evaluated. Crew leaders from each district should be able to communicate to each other and to the Superintendent of Maintenance from their respective locations.

- Purchase maintenance scheduling computer applications to improve scheduling and tracking of maintenance activities. Evaluate the current work order system to determine where breakdowns are occurring; eliminate the current week- to month-long delays in completing work order assignments. Establish a regular meeting schedule for the Maintenance Superintendent and District Crew Leaders to review and prepare quarterly maintenance schedules and staff requirements.
- Improve staff morale by conducting regular updates for the entire maintenance staff to familiarize them with upcoming schedules, special maintenance needs, and instruction on improving maintenance methods and techniques.

District Maintenance

The maintenance function is organized into four geographic districts, with a fifth maintenance district, Wildwood Park. These districts are responsible for performing the grounds-related tasks such as mowing, litter control, and general cleaning. Personnel assigned to the district operations are divided into roving crews and Wildwood crew and are led by Park Maintenance Managers who report to the Recreation and Leisure Services Superintendent (Maintenance). Maintenance crew sizes vary and are determined by the size of the parks to be maintained by each crew. The trash collection crew is composed of a driver and helper.

As the Columbia County Parks system grows and adds park acreage and facilities to the system, we recommend that new positions be added in the following areas:

- The Outdoor Facility Maintenance work area is responsible for maintenance and repair of all outdoor park facilities owned or operated by the Recreation and Leisure Services Department. Responsibilities of the work area include turf maintenance, infield upkeep, impervious surface maintenance, maintenance of pavilions and small park buildings.
- The Skilled Trades portion of the maintenance division is beneficial to the department as facilities are added. The skilled trades staff will assist the maintenance crews in repairs and maintenance to HVAC systems, plumbing, electrical and special carpentry projects. The skilled trades staff will also be charged with building special projects and coordinating contract employees in their construction and maintenance projects.
- Horticulture and forestry are the responsibility of the work area led by an Arborist who reports to the Recreation and Leisure Services Maintenance Superintendent. This work area focuses on the preservation and maintenance of trees, shrubs and other plant material in parks and other public spaces. The area also provides assistance to the Columbia County Planning offices on issues related to trees throughout the county. Additionally, the forestry work group is responsible for maintenance and preservation of trees on the city's right-of-ways and plays a key role in the emergency management team that responds to storm damage.

The Maintenance Section Organizational Chart presents a simple, working hierarchy. The District Supervisors and Crew Leaders oversee the Maintenance Crews in each dis-

trict. (see figure 4.9) Job descriptions focusing on primary responsibilities and requirements for employees of the maintenance section are listed below.

- *Recreation and Leisure Services Superintendent of Maintenance*

The Superintendent performs administrative work and is responsible for managing and directing all aspects of the Maintenance Section. He or she plans, assigns, supervises and monitors the activities of section employees and directs and monitors the daily activities of the section. Section activities include design, maintenance, landscaping, beautification, and improvements of parks, parkways, ball fields and other land and buildings owned and managed by the Division. The Superintendent is also responsible for detailed financial accounting records and monthly and yearly financial reports. The position requires a bachelor's degree in recreation or parks administration, public administration, landscape architecture, horticulture or another related field and four years of administrative experience.

- *Administrative Assistant*

Senior Staff Assistants are responsible for supervisory, clerical paraprofessional secretarial, word processing and financial duties. The Administrative Assistant will tabulate work orders and assist in maintaining equipment contracts, purchase orders and budget ledgers. The position requires 18 months of vocational education and one year of responsible related experience.

- *Parks Maintenance District Supervisor**

District Supervisors supervise crews of unskilled and semi-skilled maintenance crew workers. They plan and organize jobs, schedule crews and review completed work for compliance with standards. The position requires training in skilled trades and two years of related experience one year of which must have been in a supervisory capacity.

**Initially, the district supervisors will serve as both a crew leader and district supervisor. As the facilities are expanded in each district, crew leaders will be hired, and the district supervisor will concentrate his/her efforts in their supervisory duties.*

- *Parks Maintenance Crew Leader**

Parks Maintenance Crew Leaders operate a variety of equipment and perform manual tasks related to public service activities. This designation may include supervisory authority and responsibility for supervising Parks Maintenance crew members. The position requires a high school diploma and one year of relevant work experience.

- *Parks Maintenance Crew Member*

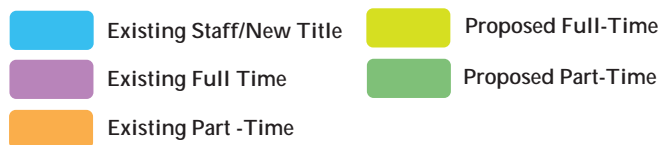
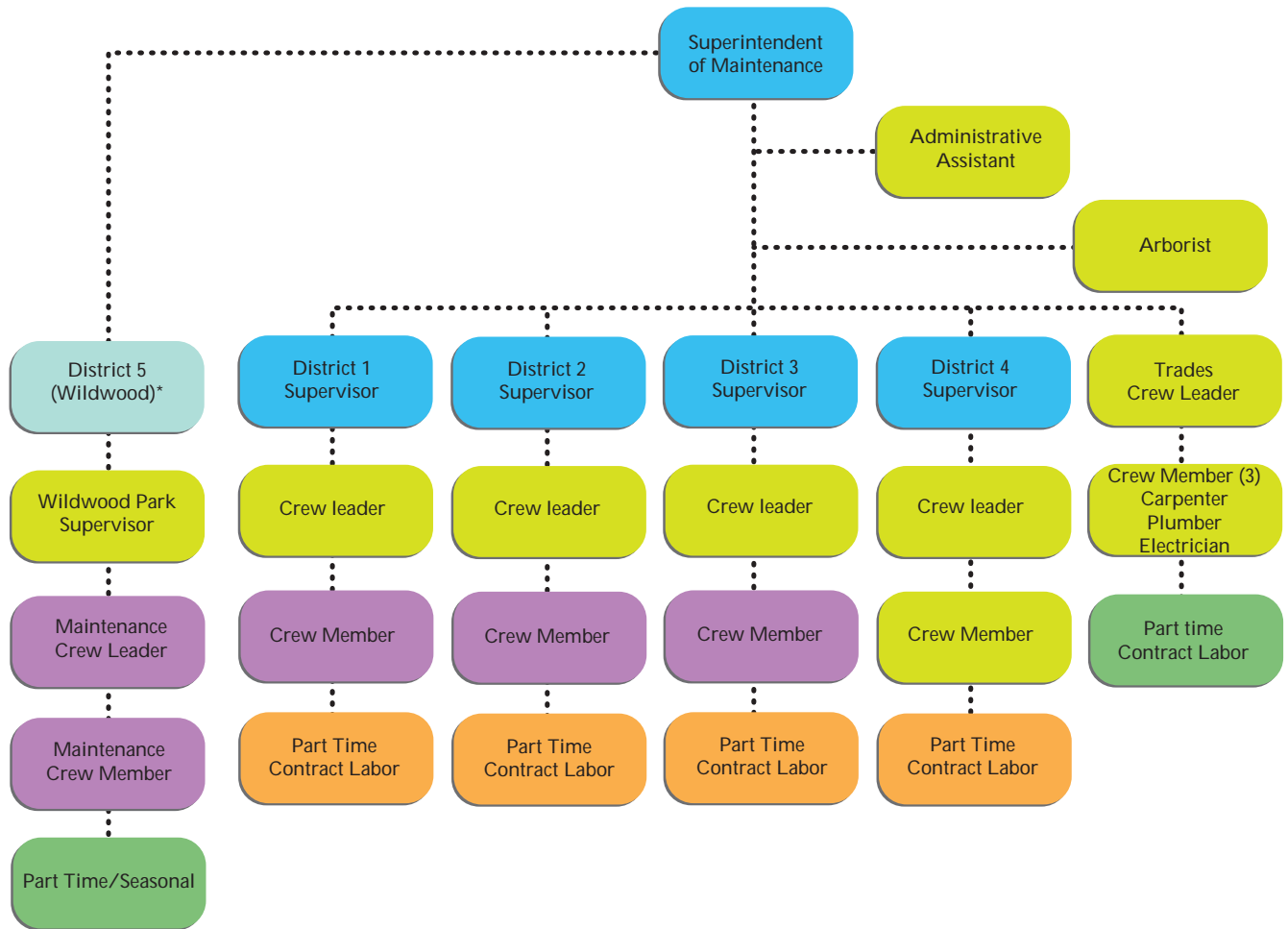
Crew Members perform manual, unskilled and semi-skilled labor activities of routine and moderate difficulty. The position requires a grade school education and good knowledge of general maintenance and repair rules and standards.

- *Parks Maintenance Worker (Stores Clerk) (new position)*

The Stores Clerk maintains proper inventory levels and receives inventory, equipment and other supplies and materials. The position requires a high school education and one year of relevant experience.

Proposed Maintenance Organization Chart

Figure 4.9



- *Trades Crew Leader (new position)*

The Trades Crew Leader performs supervisory and skilled work in skilled trades including construction or general mechanical and maintenance/repair of public facilities. He or she supervises skilled and semi-skilled crew members in the areas of carpentry, concrete, plumbing, HVAC, masonry, painting and plastering. The position requires 18 months of vocational training and five years in general construction experience and journeyman-level licensure.

- *Skilled Trades Crew Member - Carpenter (new position)*

The Senior Skilled Trades Crew Member performs carpentry trades work. He or she estimates costs of supplies and materials, plans job schedules and prioritizes repairs. The position requires 18 months of vocational training in one of several skilled trades and two years of relevant experience.

- *Skilled Trades Crew Member – Electrician (new position)*

Skilled Trades Crew Members participate primarily in the electrician trade. He or she estimates costs of supplies and materials, plans job schedules and prioritizes repairs. They are required to have 18 months of vocational training and one year of journeyman-level experience in their assigned area.

- *Skilled Trades Crew Member – Plumber (new position)*

Skilled Trades Crew Members participate primarily in the plumbing trade. He or she estimates costs of supplies and materials, plans job schedules and prioritizes repairs. They are required to have 18 months of vocational training and one year of journeyman-level experience in their assigned area.

- *Arborist (new position)*

The Arborist reports to the Superintendent and performs administrative and supervisory work in the specialized fields of horticulture and arboriculture. He or she plans, schedules and coordinates the work activities of the landscape section including maintenance and the removal and installation of trees and other plant material. The position requires a bachelor's degree in horticulture, forestry or a related field and two years of relevant experience.

- *Laborer – Part-time or Contract*

Laborers assist parks maintenance personnel with general upkeep of all parks including mowing, edging, weeding, painting and trash collection. Laborers will also assist skilled trade crews on projects. The individuals must be 18 years of age or older; no experience is necessary.

Park Maintenance Standards and Staffing Needs

As part of the reorganization, the staff responsible for park maintenance must establish a clear set of standards so that staff assignments and staffing levels can be determined. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) developed and published park maintenance standards in 1986. Standards are set for five “modes” of maintenance. Columbia County parks are currently maintained at NRPA’s Mode II—high level maintenance associated with well-developed park areas with reasonably high visitation. Per the NRPA standards, Mode II requires the following:

- Turf—lawns are cut once every five working days and aerated as required. Grass is repaired (reseeded or sodded) when bare spots occur. Weeds are removed when visible or when they occur on about five percent of the turf areas.
- Fertilizer—adequate fertilizer is applied to all plant material, as needed, to ensure healthy, vigorous plants.
- Irrigation—some type of irrigation system is available and is used, as needed, to ensure healthy and vigorous turf and plants.
- Litter control—trash is removed a minimum of once per day.
- Pruning—at least once per season unless particular species require more frequent pruning.
- Disease control—as needed, when disease or insects create noticeable damage to plant material.
- Snow removal—snow is removed from parking lots by noon the day following a snowfall.
- Lighting—fixtures are repaired or replaced when it is reported that they are malfunctioning.
- Surfaces—cleaned, repaired, repainted or replaced when appearance is deteriorated.
- Repairs—completed as soon as possible when safety, function or appearance is in question.
- Inspection—facilities are inspected by a staff person at least once per day.
- Floral plantings—rotate blooms twice per year, water, fertilize and keep weed free.
- Restrooms—maintained at least once per day when open to public use. More frequent cleaning and maintenance is required in times of especially high use such as tournaments, special events, etc.
- Special features—maintained for safety, function and appearance.¹

To achieve the desired level of maintenance requires a great deal of labor-intensive hours. Based on NRPA's productivity rates associated with maintenance standards, on interviews and discussions with Department staff and on knowledge of comparable departments' maintenance requirements, basic formulas were developed to determine the required maintenance personnel to care for Columbia County's existing parks (without contract mowing):

Mini-Park	20 hours per week
Neighborhood Park	40 hours per week
Community Park	160 hours per week plus an additional 128 hours per week on a seasonal basis (32 weeks per year) for mowing

These basic levels can be used to project required maintenance staffing. However, as no two parks within a given park category will be developed equally, adjustment to these standards will be required. An example of this can be seen by looking at Patriots Park and Riverside Park. Both are community parks but Patriots Park, at over 100 acres, requires a higher level of staffing than the 55-acre Riverside Park due to the number of additional athletic fields. Adjustments have been made in the staffing needs chart (see figure 4.10).

¹ National Recreation and Park Association. Park Maintenance Standards. Arlington, Virginia, 1986

Neighborhood Park = 1 FTE
 Mini-Park = 1/2 FTE
 Community Park = 4 FTE; 4 Seasonal
 Current Maintenance Staff Needs - Existing Parks

Figure 4.10

PARK	Mini-Park	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Special Use Park	Full-time Maintenance	Part-time Maintenance	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4
Patriots Park			100		4	4		X		
Riverside Park			55		4	3	X			
Appling Park		6			1	1				X
Blanchard Park		25			2	1		X		
Harlem Park		14			1	1			X	
Reed Creek Park				25			X			
Roberts Park	2				0.5	0.5	X			
Newmantown Road Park			49		3	2			X	
Goodale Park		7			2	1			X	
Bessie Thomas Center grounds				2.75	0.5				X	
Eubank Blanchard Community Center Grounds				9.8	0.5	1				X
Savannah Rapids Pavilion grounds				31	1	2	X			
TOTALS	2	52	204	68.55	19.5	16.5				

Assumption: Round down 1/2 FTEs per team.
 Therefore: 19 FTE maintenance
 16 PTE
 add skilled crew (future, as necessary)

An assessment of Columbia County's parks indicated that 19 full-time and 16 seasonal maintenance workers are needed. Currently, there are 14 full-time maintenance staff members and 8 seasonal (part-time) staff members. In order to provide proper Mode II level maintenance to the existing facilities, the maintenance division must add 5 full-time and 8 seasonal staff members to the existing staff. Existing and new maintenance employees as well as contract/seasonal employees should be assigned to the appropriate maintenance district crews listed below. Other support staff, such as contract and/or dedicated building maintenance crews, would work throughout the system and not be assigned to a team.

District 1 Riverside Park
 Reed Creek Park
 Roberts Park
 Savannah Rapids Pavilion

District 2	Patriots Park Blanchard Park
District 3	Harlem Park Goodale Park Newmantown Road Park Bessie Thomas Center grounds
District 4	Appling Park Eubank Blanchard Community Center grounds
District 5	Wildwood Park

Budget and Salaries

Current Budget Evaluation

Recreation and Parks services in Columbia County appear to be under-funded in contrast to similar counties in Georgia. The Fiscal Year (F.Y.) 2000-2001 average operating expenditure for a Georgia County population, 50,000 - 99,000, is \$1,748,187 in contrast to Columbia County operating expenditure of \$1,394,768. The average capital expenditure for Georgia counties with similar populations is \$ 2,100,000 in contrast to Columbia County's expenditure of \$1,927,000 in FY 2001. In F.Y. 2001, Georgia counties with a population of 50,000 - 94,000 spent an average \$27.35 per capita; Columbia County, for that same period, spent \$16.21 per capita. The mean per capita spending during the same period was \$54.86. The 2000 Property Tax Digest indicated the net 40% Assessment Value of Property for comparable Georgia counties with a population of 50,000 - 95,000 was \$1,836,050,000 while Columbia County's 40% Assessment Value of Property was \$2,052,194,000. The 1999 per capita income for comparable Georgia counties population, 50,000 - 99,000, was \$23,530 with a 1999 per capita income for Columbia County of \$22,931.

Analysis of the general data indicates that Columbia County's operating and capital expenditures are slightly less than similar-sized counties in Georgia. Total expenditures per capita are significantly less than similar counties, and revenue generation is less than similar counties. Analyzing Columbia County's "ability to pay" indicates Columbia County's total valuation is higher than Georgia counties of similar size and Columbia County's per capita income is slightly lower than Georgia counties of similar size.

The final component in developing a comprehensive comparison between Columbia County's Recreation and Parks Budget and the budget of similar sized counties is internal revenue generation. Internal revenue consists of fees and charges, sponsorships, concessions and other similar sources of revenue. The average total department-generated revenue for Georgia counties, population 50,000 - 99,000, was \$617,917. Columbia County Recreation and Parks generated a total of \$348,630 for that same population.

Budget Recommendations

In these times of conflicting pressures of growing services and frozen resources, public leisure delivery systems are continually searching for ways to operate more efficiently. Creative financing has become a necessity because those communities that continue to operate per the old status quo will find that it is difficult, if not impossible, to provide the higher level of service that the public demands through traditional means. Most public recreation providers have already addressed to some degree the question of how to subsidize leisure services. However, many have found that this is a continually evolving issue which requires regular re-evaluation. What works today may not work tomorrow. What works in one community might not work in another. Because recreation providers deal in value-based services, best practices are difficult to establish; ideals that influence decisions regarding the level of services to be provided and at what cost to the participants vary regionally. A community-focused evaluation allows a provider to set fiscal policies that will meet the public's need for high quality leisure services, while at the same time increasing "recovery rates" which is the portion of operating costs recovered from non-tax resources. In communities where a standard level of recreation and parks services are provided through efficient operations utilizing tax-based revenue, the level of service can be "stepped up" in a fair and equitable manner through adoption of policies governing the charges of fees and services. Fiscal policies should be based on a clear philosophy of the community's ability and willingness to pay; it should provide alternatives for eliminating barriers to participation; and it should provide consideration for subsidizing program and facility costs for various groups and classes of participants.

In assessing Columbia County's current budget for Recreation and Leisure Services, this study recommends the following:

- A dedicated capital improvement plan should be added to coincide with the current and future SPLOST initiative.
- The county's annual Ad Valorem contribution for Recreation and Leisure Services should increase at a rate higher than the projected 6% Ad Valorem growth rate projected by the County budget office, dependent on the implementation of the five-year capital improvement plan.
- Internal revenues should increase by a minimum of 10% per year over the next five years in conjunction with the expanded programs and facilities represented in the five-year capital plan.
- The County should explore dedicated funding sources for special recreation programs and facilities such as a percent of total tax for special events, boat launch fees for boat ramp repair and construction, etc.

The implementation of these basic strategies should allow the County to maintain its current level of service. Any significant service level increases or the addition of high cost facilities, such as an aquatic complex, would require additional offsetting revenues. Columbia County utilizes fees and charges for various programs but does not appear

to have a standard or general philosophy in place, or policies to govern the establishment of fees under varying circumstances.

Philosophy Statement

Columbia County could benefit from development of a philosophy statement related to fees for services. This statement should take into consideration the basic principles and quality-of-life issues which would influence decision-making regarding policies for fee-based programs and services. This philosophy will help administrators, elected officials, front-line employees and citizens understand the need for fees under prescribed circumstances to provide a described level of service. This philosophy statement should serve as the foundation upon which the policies regarding fees and services are developed. A sample philosophy statement is provided below.

The Columbia County Recreation and Parks Department provides a basic level of service to the citizenry utilizing tax revenues. The public has a growing need for improved and varied leisure services over and above what traditional funding sources can provide. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Columbia County Recreation and Parks Department to develop policies governing the establishment of fees for services that can enhance the existing level of services and overall quality of life in Columbia County.

Policy Development

It is recommended that Columbia County Recreation and Parks Department develop a set of administrative policies that accomplish the following:

- Define, in general terms, a level of service to be provided through traditional tax dollars.
- Establish guidelines for setting fees.
- Empower front-line recreation supervisors to implement fee-based programs according to guidelines provided.
- Establish a special fund to account for the provision of services over and above those traditionally provided through tax-resources, otherwise defined as the basic services.

Policies should be developed to:

- Differentiate between the basic level of service provided by the tax bill and the special services to be provided through the payment of fees. This eliminates any confusion later as to what the taxpayer should expect to receive from his/her tax dollars, and what he/she should expect to have to pay additional fees for. Basic services traditionally promote physical and mental well-being, and provide for safe, clean and attractive parks and facilities. Basic services also generally include costs related to "inclusion" efforts to ensure that those who are physically or financially unable to access and participate in basic services are able to do so. Special services usually serve to satisfy a particular recreational need of a group of persons or class of citizenry and have higher operating costs due to special facility, instructional, equipment or staffing needs.
- Establish whether or not new revenue generated from fees and charges should serve only to supplement the tax-supported budget or if this new revenue should also replace a portion of the tax-supported budget. In cases where the new revenue is expected to replace a portion of the tax-supported budget, the policy should address a maximum and minimum percentage of the budget that should be replaced and

describe the “shift” in services that will move from traditional tax-support to the new fee- support system.

- Set the groundwork for a comprehensive fee-based leisure delivery system, including making decisions as to what types of fees shall be charged.
- Determine what process shall be utilized to set fees, and who shall be authorized to approve fee structures.
- Determine whether certain programs should be subsidized for particular groups or classes of citizens to ensure that all citizens have equal access to quality programs beyond the basic level of service that the tax-supported budget provides.
- Determine if there should be a fee-waiver or reduction procedure to allow individuals or groups to request fee variances based on special circumstances.
- Establish whether a minimum percentage of operating costs shall be “recovered” by fees paid directly by participants and determine to what degree the outcome in terms of benefits will play in the expected recovery rates for different programs.
- Empower front-line recreation supervisors to implement fee-based programs according to guidelines provided.
- Allow front line employees to implement new programs to meet the needs of the overall citizenry or special populations.
- Allow front line employees to make recommendations on fees according to established policies and taking into consideration the differences in ability to pay and the value-added benefits that the program offers.
- Separately account for revenues and expenditures which are attributed to the increased services being provided.
- Provide necessary administrative and fiscal oversight to ensure the adherence to established policies.
- Establish the method by which fee-based services budgets should be set up and amended.

Fees and Charges Procedure Recommendations

1. Determine the basic level of service to be provided through tax revenues. Determine whether the current tax supported services should be supplemented by fees charged for services, or if some of the “traditional” tax-supported services should be replaced by fee-based services. For example:

If the County has traditionally provided free athletic programs for youth, a decision has to be made as to whether these types of programs will continue to be provided as a basic level of services, or whether these programs need to be classified as special programs supported by fees, which would free up the tax resources to be used for or to enhance other county services. It may be that the basic level of service might include the costs for operating and maintaining the facilities (costs which are usually indirectly related to the program) while the fees might cover the direct operating costs of the program (i.e. t-shirts, part-time staff for coaches or umpires, athletic equipment, etc.)

2. Determine what types of fees to charge for which programs and services and establish a method for determining how much to charge. We recommend Cost-Based pricing which excludes indirect services that are provided as part of the basic level of service. We also recommend that the recovery rate be established at an average rate of

80%, although staff may want to take a more in-depth look at this rate to determine the feasibility. The example listed below shows how the fees for a local adult softball program are established:

Six Team Program
Twelve players per team
10 game schedule (= total of 30 games)

Expense Category	Breakdown/Description	Direct Cost	Indirect Cost	Total Cost
Salaries	Part-time program coordinator (\$7/hour X 80 hrs) = \$560 Athletic Director (8 hours X \$21.65/hour) = \$173.20 Administrative Services (2 hours at \$16.50/hour) = \$33	560	206	766
Equipment/Supplies	T-Shirts (72 X \$5.50) = \$396 Trophies for 1st place team (12 X 14.50) = \$174	570	0	570
Contract Services	Officials (30 games X 2 officials X \$16/game) = \$960	960	0	960
Maintenance	Lining and raking the field (45 hours X \$14.50/hr) = \$652.50 Mowing, watering and maintaining the field = \$400	653	400	1053
Other	Telephone = \$50 Printing = \$25	25	50	75
		2768	656	3424

Fee to charge per team = \$2,768 divided by the number of teams (6) = \$461; or
Fee to be charged per person = \$2,768 divided by the number of participants (72) = \$38

Expected revenues = \$2,768. Total program cost (indirect and direct costs) = \$3,424
Recovery rate = Revenues \$2,768 divided by total cost \$3,424 = 80%

The recovery rate is within the recommended guidelines. Fees can be charged to a team or to individual participants. Fees could be further reduced by soliciting program or team sponsors.

If the recovery rate for a particular program is lower than the adopted rate, this might be offset by the expected benefit to a particular group of people.

3. Set in place a procedure for groups or individuals to request fee adjustments or waivers based on established criteria. In cases where a group couldn't be expected to pay fees high enough to meet the established recovery rates, partnerships and sponsorships can help to offset a portion of the costs so that fees can be set at prices that are fair and equitable.

4. Establish a special fund to be used exclusively for accounting for those special services provided by the Columbia County Recreation and Parks Department over and above the basic services which are tax-supported.

5. Establish a procedure to be used by front-line recreation staff to request authorization to add a new program to the "menu" of special services. Basic information to justify the program should include the target population (gender, economic status, age, etc.), contract requirements, a budget for program expenses and revenues, and an

explanation of how the program will meet a need or benefit the community. The budget for the program shall break down both direct expenses (which would be accounted for in the fund specifically established for same) and indirect expenses (which would be accounted for in the general fund budgets.) By providing the total estimated direct and indirect expenses, management can determine whether policies regarding recovery rates are being complied with. Additionally, by having staff provide a statement regarding how the program will meet a special need in the community, management is able to evaluate the potential outcome in terms of benefits provided. This is especially important when special services are being provided at recovery rates below the adopted rates per established policy.

Administrative Oversight

We recommend an environment where the front-line staff is free to evaluate and serve the community's needs, but which also allows proper administrative oversight to ensure that policies and procedures are adhered to and that pre-determined criteria regarding fees and charges are met.

Salaries

Even though the overall budget for Recreation and Leisure Services in Columbia County is below the average in similar communities, the salaries for key personnel appear to be in line with the regional averages. We looked at the salaries of key departmental staff and compared those salaries with like communities in Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee. The following table compares average salaries for these key positions in communities with a 50,000 – 100,000 population:

Average Salary for Key Recreation and Parks Personnel

Position	Columbia County	Georgia	Tennessee	Florida
Director	52,000	44,237	63,488	74,074
Recreation Superintendent	44,824	36,751	42,418	48,111
Community Center Supervisor	24,044	30,313	36,000	35,672
Recreation Supervisor	33,342	30,622	28,000	36,366
Parks Maintenance Superintendent	36,150	31,582	33,354	48,920
Parks Maintenance Supervisor	27,289	24,818	33,800	40,991

It is often difficult to find comparable job titles from community to community. The table reflects averages for positions with comparable responsibilities. Columbia County should make every effort to utilize standard job titles to better identify an employee's position within the organization. This will also assist in comparing Columbia County Recreation and Leisure Services salaries with those of similar communities. We recommend that all division heads below the Director be Superintendents. The third tier, those reporting to the Superintendents, should be Supervisors; and the fourth tier (in the Recreation Division) should be Specialists. This would result in an organizational structure as previously discussed in each division.

In most cases, personnel in positions of comparable responsibility should receive comparable pay. In review of the salary table, we find one element, Community Center Supervisor, which warrants further review. Columbia County shows a salary for this

position of \$24,044. The Georgia average for this position title is \$30,313 with Tennessee and Florida being \$36,600 and \$35,672 respectively. Community Centers come in many different sizes with different methods of operations. We recommend the department identify at least five (5) community population centers of similar size and operations and encourage a comparison of the responsibilities and salaries of the various Community Center Supervisors. The key elements for comparison are:

- a. Personnel – number of employees and expertise of those employees
- b. Budget – size of budget, revenue and cash handling responsibilities
- c. Contract Management – responsibilities related to sub-leases, program contracts, and management of same
- d. Physical Plant – responsibilities related to the upkeep and management of the building and surrounding grounds

Upon review of these factors, the department administration should be able to provide an accurate recommendation for this position.

Overall, the salaries of the key positions for Columbia County Recreation and Leisure Services appear to be in line with both salaries in Georgia and the immediate region. To ensure the ability to attract quality staff, it is important that a wage and salary study be conducted every five years.